SHARPTOWN BRIDGE WI - 118

Maryland Route 313 over the Nanticoke River
Sharptown, Maryland

7 - Description continued

The Sharptown Bridge was originally operated by a hand crank and an electric motor was installed in 1913. Other than replacement of the deck in 1931, 1952, and 1976, the Sharptown Bridge is virtually unaltered and continues to carry traffic, although weight restrictions are in effect.

The State Highway Administration's Bureau of Bridge Design retains one sheet of drawings of the deck replacement dated 1931 and six sheets of deck replacement drawings dated 1976.

Notes:

1. Report of the State Roads Commission of Maryland, 1908-1911, p. 7.

2. Ibid, p. 9.

3. Ibid, p. 15.

4. Annual Reports of the State Roads Commission, 1912, p. 64.

5. Hovey, O. E., Movable Bridges, pp. 53-54.

WI-118

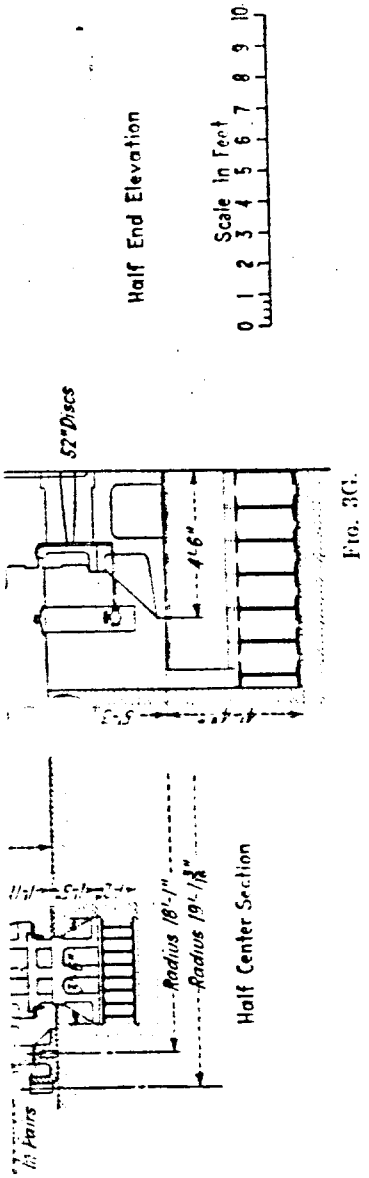


FIG. 3G.

faces accurately ground. The middle disc is of hard bronze. Special provision is made for lubrication and cleaning. As this bridge is a double-deck structure, the surface exposed to wind pressure is large, with the result that there are heavy pressures on the transverse balance wheels. The reaction is 378,000 lbs. Four wheels were used on each

DOUBLE-TRACK, RIM-BEARING, RAILWAY SWING SPANS.

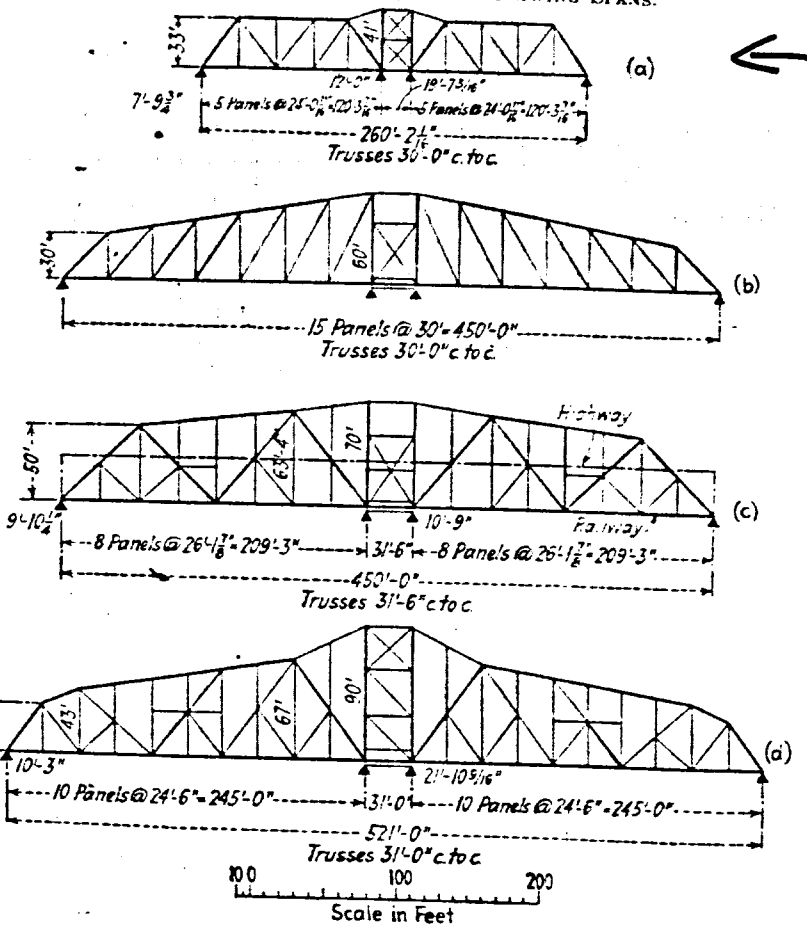
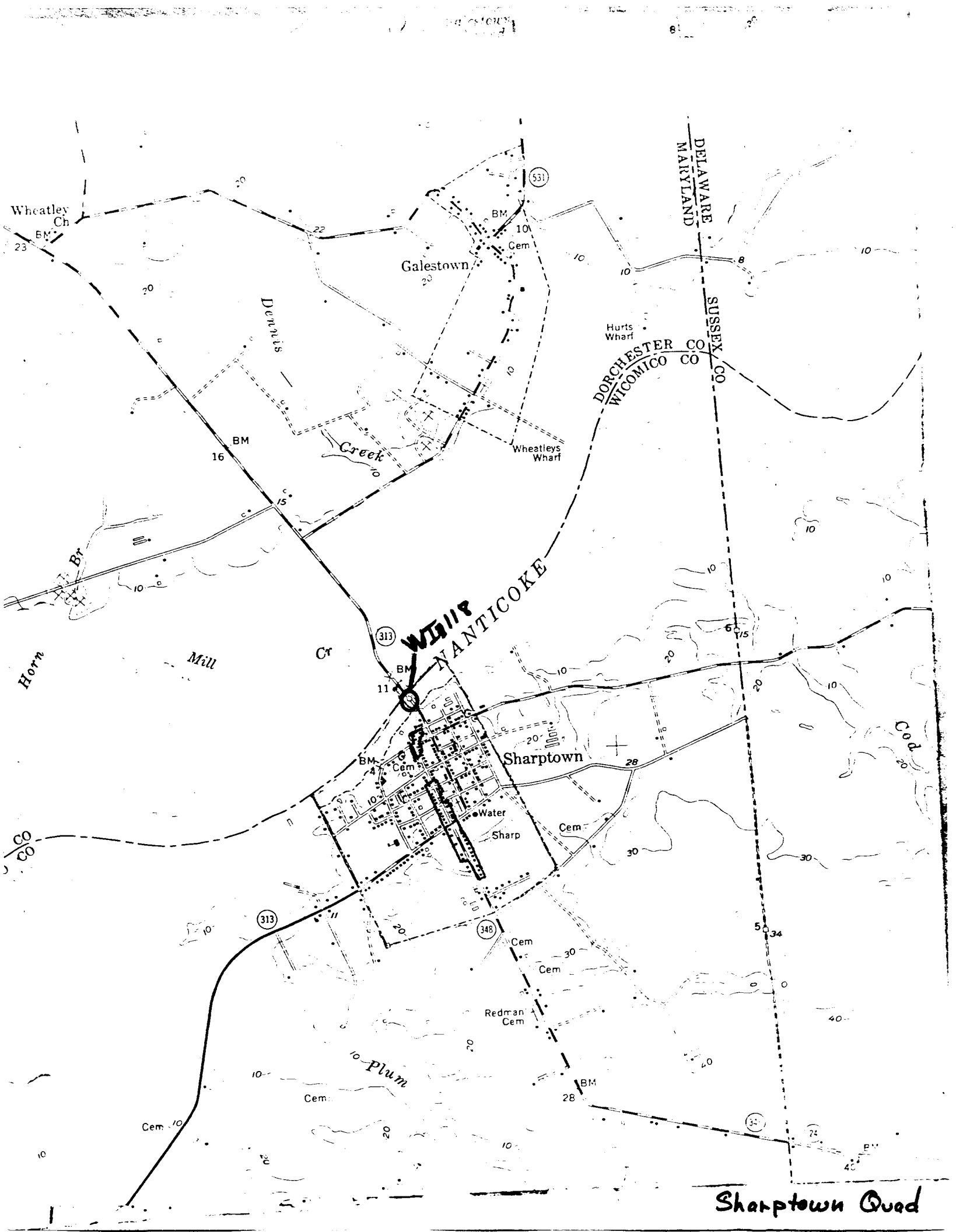


FIG. 3H.

side, equalized in pairs. Two pairs were used longitudinally, making a total of twelve wheels for the bridge. The wedges all move longitudinally and are the largest yet built.

The mechanism is operated by electric motors. Four main pinions engage the rack on the center pier. Details of the machinery are given in Volume II, Chapter III, Art. 6.


Wheatley Ch
BM
Galestown
Cem
BM
531
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
SUSSEX CO
DORCHESTER CO
WICOMICO CO
Hurts Wharf
Dennis
Creek
BM
16
Wheatleys Wharf
Br
313
WT118
NANTICOKE
Horn
Mill
Cr
BM
11
Sharptown
BM
Cem
Water
Sharp
Cem
28
30
Cod
CO
CO
313
348
Cem
Cem
Redman Cem
Plum
Cem
Cem
BM
28
34
Sharptown Quad

WI - 118

MAGI # 2301183717

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

part of Sharptown Historic Resource Area

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON
Sharptown Bridge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Maryland Route 313 over the Nanticoke River

CITY, TOWN
Sharptown

X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE
Maryland

COUNTY
Wicomico

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	X TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
State Highway Administration

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER
301 West Preston Street

CITY, TOWN
Baltimore

__ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Maryland 21201

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:

Folio #:

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Wicomico County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
North Division Street

CITY, TOWN
Salisbury

STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

WI-118

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
_EXCELLENT	_DETERIORATED	_UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
_GOOD	_RUINS	X ALTERED	_MOVED DATE_____
X FAIR	_UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The bridge at Sharptown carries Maryland Route 313 across the Nanticoke River in a generally N-S direction. It is a swing bridge on a center pivot, with all machinery located in the timber cutwater (18' in width the length of the swing) in the center of the boat channel in the middle of the stream. The swing is approached from either bank via causeways of three 75' steel girders each. The bridge itself is a 200' composite truss of two mirror image Pratt trusses connected centrally by a portion of a camelback truss. The Pratt trusses are of three panels each with no secondary diagonals in the innermost panels. The inner inclined end posts are in the position of diagonals for the camelback, which has one central complete panel, rising above the top chords of the Pratts. Over the roadway, between the two central panels of the camelback, is a platform which supports the bridge tender's house, a situation which is rare in Maryland. All connections are riveted.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

WI-118

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	X TRANSPORTATION	
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1912 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Roanoke Iron & Bridge Co.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sharptown Bridge is significant in two areas: 1) It is the first bridge built entirely under the authority of the State Roads Commission, from original conception to dedication; 2) The bridge embodies the distinct characteristics of metal truss swing bridge construction technology in the early 20th century; this type was chosen for the particular needs of the location, being moveable to facilitate river navigation, and truss type to accommodate the ever-increasing traffic loads of automobiles and trucks on the state road system at this period in its history.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The site of the bridge was a ferry crossing from at least the 1750's when the area of Sharptown was settled, until the bridge was built. The increased land traffic resulting from the proliferation of the automobile led to the establishment of a State Roads Commission (SRC) in 1908 to deal with the problems of land travel in Maryland. In 1910, further appropriations were made to the SRC under the Public Highways Act, which resulted in the SRC having full control of all State Road building.[1] Under the provisions of this act, several bridges were transferred to SRC jurisdiction from the State Geological and Economic Survey while still in the design and construction stages.[2] The Act also provided funds "for the building of a bridge across the Nanticoke River at Sharptown."[3]

The Department of Surveys of the SRC prepared plans and specifications and the contract was awarded on July 31, 1911 to the Roanoke Iron and Bridge Company of Roanoke, Virginia. The Roanoke Company was a prolific designer and builder of iron and steel truss bridges in Virginia and surrounding states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The bridge was completed on November 20, 1912 at a total cost of $72,539.54.[4]

The Sharptown Bridge resembles in elevation a double track rim-bearing railway swing span designed by the Erie Railroad Company in 1900; the design was revised in June 1905 and built in 1907. (See attached illustration.)[5] Several specifications of the Sharptown Bridge differ from this model. Additional tension members were added to the outer two panels in each truss and the central panel supporting the tender's house. The load configuration is rim-bearing.

(continued)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

WI-118

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Annual Reports of the State Roads Commission. 1908-11, 1912-1915.
Hovey, Otis Ellis. Movable Bridges, V. 1: Superstructures. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1926.
A History of Road Building in Maryland. State Roads Commission, 1958.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY
Maryland	Dorchester
Maryland	Wicomico

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Janet Davis/John Hnedak

ORGANIZATION
Maryland Historical Trust

DATE
March 1981

STREET & NUMBER
21 State Circle

TELEPHONE
(301) 269-2438

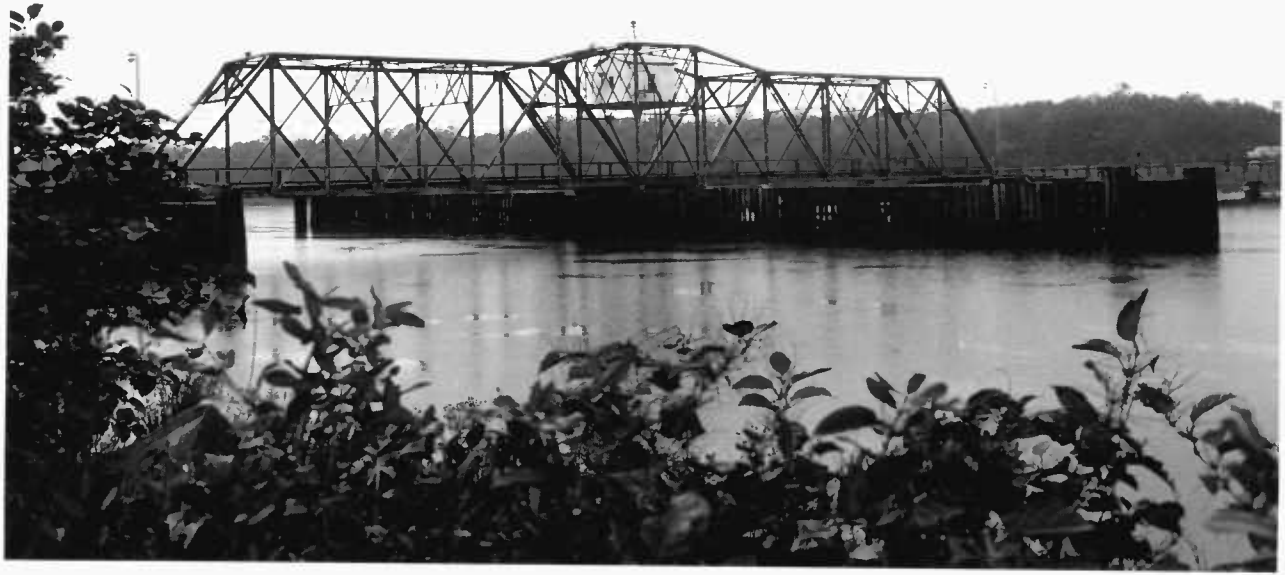
CITY OR TOWN
Annapolis

STATE
Maryland 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



* 1983 - S3900 SHADYSIDE, MARYLAND MTE #13

W1-115

Sharptown Bridge

MD 313

[illegible]


53904

1983 * 53907


LOWE'S
SEAFOOD
& BAIT
DRAW
BRIDGE
NANTICOKE
RIVER
WARNING
16,000 POUNDS
15 MI PER HOUR
BAY
BRIDGE
SPEED
LIMIT
15

* 1983-5906